



**COLONEL James A. Zanella**  
**Program Manager**  
**U.S. Army - Military Assistance Group, Saudi Arabia**

Colonel James A. Zanella assumed the position of Program Manager for the U.S. Army - Military Assistance Group (USA-MAG) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in October 2020. He also serves concurrently as the Deputy to the Program Manager, Office of the Program Manager-Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG).

His 22 years as an Infantry Officer began after he was commissioned at West Point in 1999. Since then, his assignments have included: Mechanized Platoon Leader and Heavy Mortar Platoon Leader, 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, Friedberg, Germany; Heavy Mortar Platoon Leader during an Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment, May to November 2003; Senior Platoon Trainer and Battalion Operations Officer, 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course; Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, September 2006, also leading the company during 15 months of counterinsurgency operations at Forward Operating Base Loyalty in East-Baghdad, Iraq; October 2006 to December 2007 as part of the Iraq Surge; Maneuver Observer Trainer and Chief of Exercise Control for Operations Group Charlie, U.S. Army Mission Command Training Program, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Joint Operations Planner for U.S. Forces – Afghanistan June 2012 in Kabul; J5 Plans and Policy Directorate Planner, working national contingency plans with USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, the Joint Staff, and other CENTCOM Component Commands; Battalion Operations Officer, training Ranger students for the 4th Ranger Training Battalion, Fort Benning, Georgia, June 2013 to June 2014; Brigade Operations Officer for 199th Infantry Brigade (Leader Development), June 2015, and Brigade Deputy Commander through March 2016; Executive Officer to the Infantry Commandant for the Infantry School through December 2016; Director of Operations, G3, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning, Georgia through June 2017; Commander of 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course, June 2017 to June 2019; Deputy Director of Operations for Army Futures Command, Austin, Texas, July 2019 to July 2020. Colonel Zanella then attended Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas as a U.S. Army War College Fellow.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Military History from West Point, a Master of Science in International Relations from Troy University, and a Masters of Military Art and Science in Theater Operations from the School of Advanced Military Studies.

Colonel Zanella's military education includes War College Fellowship, School of Advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Joint Operations Planner Course, Joint Firepower Course, the Infantry Officers' Advanced and Basic Courses, Infantry Mortar Leader's Course, Bradley Fighting Vehicle Commander's Course, Ranger School, Air Assault School, Airborne School, Army Combatives Instructor Levels I and II, the Army Instructor Trainers' Course, and the Master Fitness Trainers Course.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (3x OLC), Army Commendation Medal (3x OLC), Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Award, Army Superior Unit Award (1x OLC), National Defense Service Medal (w/ Star), Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal (2x Campaign Stars), Global War On Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon (Numeral 3), NATO Service Medal (ISAF), Ranger Tab, Airborne Wings, Air Assault Wings, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency in Gold and Bronze.

COL Zanella is married and has two sons.